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26 April 1975

DCI BRIEFING FOR
26 APRIL WSAG MEETING

VIETNAM

- I. The South Vietnamese National Assembly after hours of debate today has taken an inconclusive action that threatens to dangerously prolong the process of establishing a new government acceptable to the Communists.
 - A. The Assembly voted to give President Huong the option of stepping aside in favor of General "Big" Minh or of staying as head of state.
 - B. If the Saigon government does not decide quickly, the North Vietnamese are likely to take some strong military action to force the political process to a quick resolution.
- II. A PRG statement on 24 April, immediately endorsed by Hanoi, has spelled out some additional details of the present Communist position.
 - A. First, a new government must demand the immediate withdrawal of all American military and intelligence personnel from South Vietnam. (This formulation could allow for a residual US diplomatic presence.)

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- B. Also, it must demonstrate its sincerity "through realistic actions, not through pledges" -- a formulation suggesting that a cease-fire is possible if Communist terms are completely and promptly met.
- C. The PRG and Hanoi publicly continue to criticize the large-scale evacuation of South Vietnamese.
1. The PRG statement specifically warned that the US "would be held fully responsible for all consequences" if it held to its "present policy."
 2. The statement also demanded that the US remove all its warships and Marines from South Vietnamese "territorial waters."

III. We now believe that Hanoi has been deliberately holding back militarily in order to allow some time for the evacuation process and for a government of surrender to be established in Saigon.

- A. A recently captured prisoner from the North Vietnamese 341st division, located east of Bien Hoa, has stated that his unit was briefed on April 23 that the PRG was negotiating with the GVN for a cease-fire.

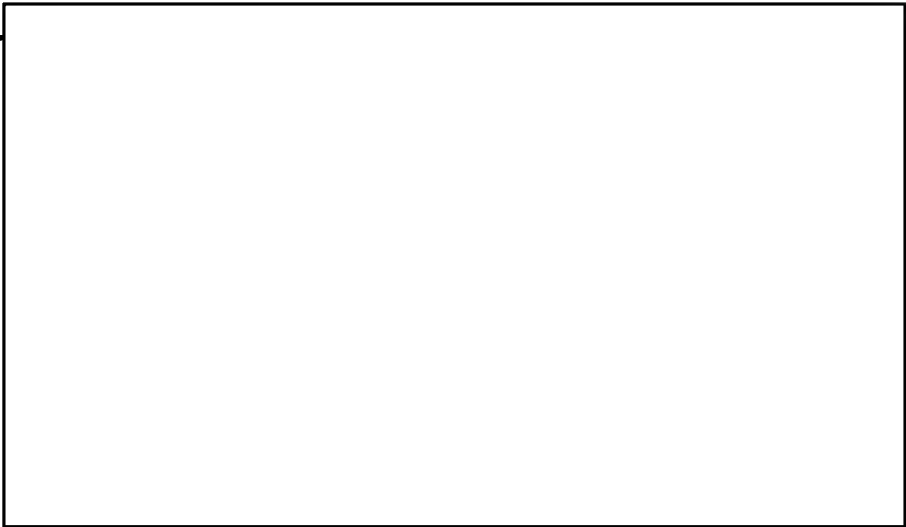
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1. He was told that if those talks fail, Communist military units are in position and prepared to attack Saigon.
 2. The PRG military spokesman in Saigon also told newsmen yesterday that Communist units were ready to attack the capital.
 3. PRG spokesmen abroad continue to advocate a peaceful resolution.
- B. The North Vietnamese are indeed continuing their preparations for attacks on Saigon and Tan Son Nhut airbase.

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130-mm. guns with 2,600 rounds of ammunition have already been deployed "south of the airfield." The field in question is probably Tan Son Nhut.

3. North Vietnamese antiaircraft artillery is also now within range of Tan Son Nhut. The crew of one US transport reported observing possible antiaircraft fire while it was at 18,000 feet altitude over the field. We believe that the Communists now have the capability to shoot down transport aircraft at this range if they choose to do so.

C. North Vietnamese units also have been noted moving closer to Saigon.

1. A prisoner belonging to the newly arrived North Vietnamese 316th Division claims his engineer unit is improving roads in eastern Hau Nghia Province to support tanks and heavy artillery.
2. Southwest of Saigon, four other divisions have continued to edge closer toward Saigon, and sporadic fighting has taken place in this area.

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3. East of the capital, three North Vietnamese divisions have continued to move into position for new attacks on the Bien Hoa - Long Binh complex.

IV. The commanding general of the South Vietnamese Airborne Division has provided a frank assessment of military preparations in Saigon.

- A. According to Brigadier General Luong, the South Vietnamese Joint General Staff has provided no guidance for the defense of the capital. Luong blames JGS chairman General Vien for failing to provide the leadership the military now urgently needs.
- B. Luong nevertheless states that despite signs of collapse in other ARVN units in MR-3, discipline and morale in the Airborne is good and it is prepared to fight. His division has two brigades and support units in the Saigon area and a third brigade in Phuoc Tuy Province.
- C. Luong also expressed fear that the large number of GVN military personnel and their dependents congregating at Tan Son Nhut airport could produce a chaotic situation.

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- V. Outside of Saigon, the battlefield situation is not appreciably changed.
- A. The North Vietnamese have moved closer to Vung Tau.
 - B. There has been little action in the Delta, and according to latest reports, Route 4 running from Saigon to the Delta is still open.
 - C. The unit morale of GVN troops is still holding in the absence of combat, but it is much more fragile in MR-3 than in the Delta.
- VI. In sum, the action for the moment has shifted to the political arena.
- A. At the same time, the continuing evacuation is fueling tensions in Saigon, and the potential for panic in the city is rising, although so far there has been no significant public disorder.

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